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Clayton Atari Computer Enthusiasts

LACE

400 800 600XL 800XL 1200XL 65XE 130XE 520ST 1040ST MEGA ST

Jerry Troy Pat Don

WELCOME NEW OFFICERS!

Good Luck in 1988

LACE, The monthly
Designed to assist the Atari user in the use and enjoyment of their ATARI computer and accessories.

All articles may be sent to the editor. Mail to:
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4687 Jefferson Av.
Ogden, Utah 84403
Or upload to the L.A.C.E. BBS AT:
825-4678

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EDITOR'S VIEWS:

Well, another crew takes the helm. We wish to thank the 1987 officers for a job well done. We hope to do as well. It is not an easy task to keep a computer club up and running. I especially feel the challenge to fill the shoes of Don Smith as editor of this LACE newsletter. Don did a great job in a complicated area, as I am finding out. Just getting the newsletter out on time will be my biggest challenge.

Probably the most difficult part of my new job will be to fill these pages with worthwhile articles. This is where I seek your support and help. One purpose of a monthly newsletter is to keep us informed of new changes in ATARI. If anyone runs across an article which you feel will be good for everyone to read, you can send it to me by mail or upload it to the BBS. Or if you want to just express your views about some topic of interest to you, please let us all hear about it. We will have a column for "Letters to the Editor" for that purpose, so write today.

If this edition seems a bit thin to you, it is probably because of the lack of articles received from the members. Let's fill up these pages and learn together.

I hope to get to know you all better as we learn together. I am eager to learn more and if you have any suggestions which will improve this newsletter, please bring it to my attention.

-thanks-

JUDD

Inside GEnie

by

GREGG PEARLMANN

(Reprinted form ANTIC, MARCH 1988)

Personal and affordable online service

GEnie, the General Electric Network for Information Exchange, has become increasingly popular with Atari users since first going online on October 1, 1985. GEnie's first Atari RoundTable started on December 11, 1985.

What CompuServe calls SIGS, Special Interest Groups such as SIG* Atari, are called RoundTables (RT's) on GEnie.

In fact, GEnie is now the official commercial online carrier of Atari Corp. BBS information. Atari Corporation Online sections are active on the GEnie RTs for Atari 8-bit and ST computers. About eight Atari Corp. employees are involved in maintaining these two sections as well as an RT for Atari Developers.

GEnie also has an RT for MichTron's ST software technical support. All four of the Atari-related RTs provide bulletin boards, software libraries, news sections and Help files. A real-time conference on some Atari topic is held on GEnie every week, with Atari Corp. employees always present.

Atari users can get a free GEnie sign-up--saving the usual $29.95--by dialing 1-800-638-8369 with a modem, waiting for a connection, typing HHH and pressing the [RETURN] key, then typing in XJM11887,ATARI at the U#- prompt.

Most GEnie personal users log on during evenings and weekends, when the hourly rate takes a breathtaking drop from $35 to $5, even for 1200 baud modems, and $10 for 2400 baud modems after business hours. Other services online include shopping, finance, reference, leisure , games and news.

According to Atari 8-bit sysom Marty Albert, there are roughly 2,200 8-bit RoundTable members. Between 75 and 150 new weekly messages is typical, but there were about 475 new messages per week during the month we were perparing this story.

Chief Atari RT sysop Darlah Hudson counts 6,215 ST RoundTable members. She says that about 1,400 messages per week were posted in the ST RoundTable during the month we were working on this story. This doesn't even include deleted messages, which adds about 10% to the total.

By way of comparison: Mike Schoenbach, sysop of the Atari 8-bit Forum on CompuServe, says that the 8-bit, ST and Developers forums total around 35,000 members, with around 1,500 to 2,000 messages per week. CompuServe hourly rates, anytime, are $6 for 300 baud and $12.50 for 1200 or 2400 baud, with a $39.95 sign-up fee. Upload time is free on both CompuServe and GEnie. ANTIC ONLINE is available on CompuServe without any extra charges, just type GO ANTIC when you log on.

TOPIC LISTS

*On our bulletin boards we

have individual topics that are easy to find," says Darlah. "Just look at the list of topics and decide which one you'd like to explore. Lately the ST bulletin board has received more detailed messages about WordPerfect than anything else. The same was once true about Publishing Partner. It depends on what's hot."

On the 8-bit board, the SX212 modem generated the most excitement recently, but much is said about the XEP80 80-column box and the upcoming XF551 drive also. "Users are writing programs for the XEP80," says Marty, "and recently someone uploaded a driver to use it with the BASIC XE cartridge.

"In the 8-bit area we're organizing a group project for a program that probably will combine ACTION! and compiled BASIC. We're considering either a MacPaint picture viewer or a terminal program. We want to use a language like ACTION!, which lends itself to the modular approach, and by using machine language subroutines written in BASIC and compiled, we can go from module to module.

"But if I restrict it to just ACTION! or just C, I'll exclude the largest part of our users, the BASIC-only programmers. Interpreted BASIC is too slow for this kind of program, but compiling it will take care of that. Keeping everyone together will be a nightmare, but I'm willing to put in the extra work. Since the 8-bit isn't getting the commercial support that it used to, we have to generate support ourselves."

INVOLVED SYSOPS

Darla and Marty both were avid CompuServe users who tried GEnie one day--Darlah at the suggestion of a friend, and Marty upon seeing an ad in ANTIC. Neither was enthralled at first. There were as few as two or three new messages a day.

There were other things about GEnie that Darlah wasn't sure she liked, so she stuck with CompuServe, occasionally calling GEnie and posting messages.

The 8-bit and ST groups then were all part of one RoundTable. ST users began heading in a different direction from the 8-bit people, and that's when Darlah was asked to get involved. She became a sysop in late 1986. "I wasn't sure if I'd have the time," she says, "but I finally dicided I'd enjoy it, because I enjoy customer service--little things that bring users back," she says. "For instance, though uploading is free, it's time-consuming, so we write thank-you notes. And we're more personalized *within* the system. Users can notify us online any time by asking us to meet them in a particular room." GEnie 'rooms' have simulated 'doors' you can lock for privacy.

Marty had also seen things on GEnie he wasn't crazy about. So on his first visit he dropped a note to the RoundTable, then logged back onto CompuServe. "When I returned to GEnie three hours later, my questions had

been answered. This really impressed me." Marty went online as a sysop in December 1986. "I was rather floored when I was asked, because I wasn't actively seeking a sysop position."

"We needed someone active in the 8-bit area," says Darlah. "Marty was the right person for the job. I'm very happy with the way he creates excitement in the 8-bit area."

Marty and Darlah do their GEnie work at their homes--in St. Louis and San Diego, respectively. Usually Marty spends four or five hours a day with GEnie, but lately it's been six to eight. Darlah used to spend only about two hours a day online, but now she spends eight to ten. "It goes in cycles," she says.

And it's not as though they have nothing to do outside GEnie. Marty is a registered nurse *and* has a PH.D. in psychology *and* he owns a tobacco and pipe store. "I keep pretty busy," he says. "I'd have to call myself a workaholic."

Darlah used to have a plumbing business. "I did that and GEnie at the same time, working 20 hours a day," she says. "It was chaotic, so I gave up the plumbing business, which was round the clock. I'm also a workaholic--I need to be heavily involved in my work."

Marty says that the public domain Express! is the best terminal program for 8-bit GEnie users. He uses it for about 90% of his terminal work, switching to BackTalk for software library maintenance. The most heavily used ST terminal software is a toss-up between Flash and Interlink," Darlah says. "All our ST Help files for text uploading and offline messages are built around Flash--of course, it so happens that I use Flash. But Interlink has slowly gained interest. People still want an 'everything' program, but there just isn't one yet."

WHO'S ON GENIE

Marty finds GEnie users very different from those on CompuServe, although to Darlah, it's not the users that are so different--it's the services. "Heavy CompuServe users point out things on GEnie that aren't like they're accustomed to on CompuServe," she says. "I used to feel the same way. It's hard to compare the two services because each has benefits the other lacks."

On the 8-bit bulletin board, Marty tends to be "very, very lenient", though he wants to keep it clean. He says, "I won't let anyone post explicit hints for adventure games. I figure that if I paid $50 for one and saw this hint--without knowing it would be there--I'd be very upset. I tell people to feel free to ask for hints, but to give hints via private messages." Darlah does the same thing in the ST area.

In both the ST and 8-bit areas, users are highly mixed. "We have topics set up where there are technical areas as well as game discussions, modem discussions, whatever," she says.

"Some users know just enough about their new 130XE's to set them up, boot the terminal program and call GEnie," says Marty. "Other users are well versed in both wardware and software."

On GEnie, past messages are always available, either on the bulletin board or in an archive. They never disappear. "Periodically we go through the topics within each category and delete irrelevant messages," says Marty, and I'm as guilty as anyone else of chit-chat. We put all the remaining messages in order and download all the messages older than, say, 60 days. Then we compress that file and upload it to the library. That way the information is still available, but we've made the bulletin board easier to use."

GENIE MAIL

Darlah says that GEnie Mail is used more on Genie than Easyplex on CompuServe because GEnie doesn't have an addressable message base. But Marty feels that one big advantage to GEnie Mail is its ability to quickly send an XMODEM file. "Several users who have written 8-bit programs that they want to market have asked me to do informal beta testing for them," he says. "Instead of uploading files to a library, where it wouldn't be 'for my eyes only,' they just send them to me via GEnie Mail."

"We have a service," says Darlah, "in which a developer can send a finished product to a place like MichTron through GEnie. Then MichTron can download it and test it. It's quicker and easier than mail."

Darlah's and Marty's Help files let users learn the system enough to feel comfortable with it. "There are files for navigating through the bulletin board, file transfer, explanation of appropriate settings, how to use mail, etc.," says Darla. "They're very detailed. Just capture a Help file, print it, and go through it step by step.

"GEnie customer service is excellent. If they can't solve a user's problem, they contact me, and I work with that user online. One of our services is to give a public domain terminal program to users who don't have one. Service is the key."

ONLINE SOURCES

GENIE
401 N. Washington Street
Rockville, MD 20850

COMPUSERVE
500 Arlington Center
Columbus, OH 43220
(800) 848-8199

PRESIDENT'S PEN:

I appreciate the opportunity of serving you as the president of your club for the coming term The merger of H.U.G., I.M.A.C.E. and L.A.C.E. is a step in the right direction for making our club the best in the state.

We all have a common interest and that is our ATARI COMPUTERS, and I'm sure we want to make our meetings enjoyable as well as an educational experience each month.

To accomplish this, it is my desire to get as many as possible involved, not to embarass any one, but to make everyone feel that this is their club and also to make them feel that they are getting something out of the time they are investing.

I am asking for your support with ideas and talent. Your officers have met and have discussed ideas that we can do to serve you better. We all desire to make our computers work for us, as well as bring entertainment to our families.

I would like to say THANKS! from all of us, and to the past officers FOR THE MANY HOURS THEY SPENT AND THE JOB THEY DID DURING THEIR PAST TERM.

JERRY

SYSOP STOP:

Welcome to the new L.A.C.E. newsletter and let me thank Judd for taking on this great task. This makes the first installment of the SYSOP STOP and I wish to invite all you members to call the BBS in the near future and make your presence known to me and the other members that call.

Let me explain the board in a few words. The board is being run on a 130XE (upgraded to 320), a Novation Smartcat Modem (300/1200), 850 interface, Amdek duel drive system, 2 Indus GT drives and the Forem BBS program (this may change at any moment provided another program is found that is better suited for our needs.)

The club has ordered an ICD MIO(256k) to add to the board and when that happens we will expand the board to have aprox. 31 meg of drives available for uploads and downloads. This will be quite an undertaking for the poor old Atari 130 but I have all the confidence in the world that she can hold her own against the big boys.

There may be times when the board is down for repairs or testing of other programs and you may even see it up and running on an Atari ST for a while if there is a lot of things that I have to get working on the 8-Bit. If you call and the program doesn't know you from Adam please bear with us and don't give up the ship just for some small problems.

Let me say this now before someone gets the feeling they are being left out in the cold. The BBS is for the L.A.C.E. members and therefore it will be your board. I have given the L.A.C.E. members full access (except sysop priv) to the board and all the nonmembers very limited access. If someone asks you why they can't do much on the board, ask them to join the club and let them know there is much more to the board than what they see. You as members have 9 message areas available to you and lots of downloads, while nonmembers have 3 message bases and a few downloads. This was done to assist the club in it's endeavor to spur interest in the club and make it work for you instead of against you. If you have a question or answer please share it with the rest of us in the L.A.C.E. Lands and if you want some help with a language please go to the Language SIGs and voice yourself. Also if you think the board needs some other area opened up, let me know and we will try to get it done. Also if you wish to upload an article for this newsletter then do it and it will be sent directly to the editor.

Any questions pertaining to the board may be sent to myself (Don Smith) or any of the other Officers and they will forward them to me if need be.

Again welcome to the New BBS and call often and let me know what your think.

Don Smith

P.S. The number is :

8 2 5 - 4 6 7 8
8 2 5 - 4 6 7 8
8 2 5-4 6 7 8
8 25-4 6 7 8
8 25-46 7 8
8 25-467 8
825-4678

Just in case you forgot

ST's CORNER:

(Secretary/Treasurer, that is)

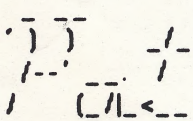
Hello everybody! I'm your new LACE Secretary/Treasurer. I didn't even have to be present to get the job. All of you are soooo thoughtful to remember me during elections while I was at the Beach Boys' concert. Sorry I couldn't be there, but you know about priorities!

I thought I'd just introduce myself to all of you. I live in Roy with my roommate and my cat, Maynard. (Who else would be crazy enough to name a cat 'Maynard'? My mind must be going in my old age!) I'm a Computer Systems Programmer at Hill AFB. I mainly work on large mainframe computers and super-mini computers as the system administrator. So this is a whole new experience using a Personal Computer. There's definitely a size difference. I am the proud owner of an Atari 1040ST, and it is NOTHING like the large computers I use at work. So you users out there who know very little about your computer are not alone! This job will be beneficial because it'll force me learn to use my ST and to become the Atari Computer Nerd that I was meant to be. So please be patient with me 'til I get the hang of this.

Speaking of new users, I know many of you are new users and don't know much about your new computer, but fear not! That's what the club is for. Don't be afraid to ask questions. None of us bite.....well, at least I haven't been bitten in the last year. If someone doesn't know the answer, we can find someone who does know. Noooooo problem!!

I would appreciate it if all of you would check the list of members to make sure all of your information is correct. I'll try to have a current list at each meeting. It will help me keep the books straight. If you notice an error, please let me know. Also, if you have any suggestions for the club, please let one of us know. We arehere to please!

Well, enough of my rambling. I hope I can help make this group even better than it was last year.



Ogdens newest Atari computer center

The Computer Connection

Is now open at: 1518 Washington Blvd.

Atari computers, IBM compatible, printers, modems, etc.
If we don't have it we will get it for you.
Special pricing on out of stock items.

Come see us for all you computer needs.

Ogdens first Atari authorized ST service center.
We service what we sell, with both technical and user support.

Open Monday - Saturday
9:00 am - 7:00 pm
Phone: 393-2328

Visa/Mastercard accepted

THIS SPACE COULD BE YOURS..

...TO ADVERTISE OR EXPRESS YOUR IDEAS. SEND IN AN ARTICLE TODAY.

NEW FACES:

Do you feel uncomfortable when you come to L.A.C.E.? If you don't know everybody in the room, you probably feel a little out of place. It's not a good feeling and we want to make everyone feel welcome when they come out to the meetings. So, NEW FACES will be dedicated to help us all get to know each other better.

This column will introduce new members to the club, and perhaps reacquaint us with some of the 'old' members.

We'll start out with the new officers so you can know them better and go from there.

. . . . . .

JUDD WEST is 42 years old going on 18. He feels that he was born a generation too soon because computers weren't around way back in the 50's. He had to settle for those boring games like Monopoly, Parchesi and Chess to fill his days. Now that computers have found a place in his home, he has seemingly found the "Fountain of Youth."

Judd was born in Lincoln, Nebraska and was reared in Cache Valley and later in Ogden. He attended Weber State College and went on to the University of Nebraska to become everybody's favorite man to visit twice a year, a Dentist. He has been practice for 15 years now in Ogden, but would rather make a living in computers if he could find a way to do it. In fact, he spends a good deal of his free time in his office playing around with his KAYPRO 286i, which is an IBM clone.

He won the L.A.C.E. 520ST computer which was given away last year in the June drawing and pushed the 8-bit aside to give plenty of room to the ST. Thank you, again for the prize.

Judd is married to Linda and they will celebrate their 20th anniversary this June. They have 5 children ages 8 through 17 and all are heavy into games, games, GAMES!

Some other hobbies outside computers and fixing bad teeth, include golf, snow and water skiing, golf, hunting, golf, racketball, golf and more golf.

As new editor he is happy to contribute to the club to make it the best in Utah.

L. A. C. E.
P.O. BOX 553
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PAT JOHNSON
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Membership expires - 01/31/89

Next Meeting: Feb. 3, 1988
Held at the CLEARFIELD DAVIS COUNTY LIBRARY at 7:00 p.m.